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20 April 1963

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



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Sino-Soviet Relations: The first public response from a member of the Chinese camp to Moscow's 30 March letter suggesting bilateral talks points up the improbability of any meaningful success for these talks.

The response appears in a three-page article in Albania's Zeri I Popullit on 18 April which specifically criticizes Khrushchev as a liar, "splitter," and anti-Marxist-Leninist. Tirana attacks the central Soviet theses on peaceful coexistence, war, disarmament, and the Cuban crisis. The article, however, concentrates on Soviet-Albanian relations and rejects the implication in Khrushchev's recent speeches and letters that a deal could be worked out by which the Chinese would accept Yugoslavia as a "socialist" country in exchange for better Soviet treatment of Albania.

While the Chinese themselves in recent weeks have maintained their agreement with the USSR to halt the exchange of polemics, it is likely that Albania is in this case acting in collusion with the Chinese, as it has done in the past. However, it is possible that Albania is acting on its own, either out of misgiving that its interests might be jeopardized by Peiping, or out of chagrin over being treated by Moscow as a Chinese satellite.

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West Germany - NATO: (West Germany's top naval officer is now convinced of the feasibility of a NATO multilateral nuclear force (MLF) based on surface vessels.)

(Admiral Zenker told US Admiral Ricketts on 18 April that, although nuclear submarines remain preferable, he now considers the surface ship solution very satisfactory and would recommend it to the political authorities in Bonn. Previously expressed German doubts as to the ability of surface ships to survive and fulfill their mission apparently were satisfactorily answered during the 17-18 April technical discussions in Bonn.)

(Agreement on the technical level is likely to facilitate a definite commitment by the West German Government to a NATO MLF. The issue now goes to the West German Defense Council, where it will undergo a close examination during the next two weeks.)

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France-NATO: (France will probably not try to block the creation of an Inter-Allied Nuclear Force (IANF) so long as it is presented as a routine NATO development, according to De Gaulle's top personal aide.)

(The aide said, however, that if it were treated as something new and important for NATO the French NATO delegate would probably be instructed to veto it. Although the procedure the US hopes would be followed for creation of the IANF would probably keep France from being able to veto its establishment, Paris could keep its nuclear-armed squadrons in Germany from participating in the force.)

(De Gaulle's insistence yesterday on the need for a French national nuclear force despite its high cost avoided specific rejection of French participation in the IANF) (b)(1) (b)(7D)

Bolivia: Military units in the La Paz area have been on emergency alert since the early hours of 18 April, apparently to guard against the possibility of leftist-inspired trouble stemming from the sudden return of Vice President Juan Lechin from his ambassadorial post in Rome.

Unit commanders have informed the US army attaché that the government has reports that some of Lechin's more volatile supporters are planning a coup against President Paz Estenssoro during the May Day festivities. Paz has probably ordered the alert as a warning to Lechin to hold his followers in check.

There is as yet no evidence that Lechin himself has engaged in any political activity prejudicial to Paz since his return on 16 April. However, his presence in La Paz probably is sufficient to create an atmosphere of political uncertainty.

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*Honduras: There is a possibility that violence may break out in Honduras during the ruling Liberal Party convention which opens today to choose the party's candidate to run for president in October.

Tension is running high between supporters of Modesto Rodas Alvarado, who appears to control a majority of the delegates' votes, and those loyal to President Ramon Villeda Morales, who opposes Rodas Alvarado's candidacy and is maneuvering to throw the nomination to someone else.

Several thousand followers of Rodas Alvarado are expected to arrive in Tegucigalpa during the weekend, ostensibly to celebrate their leader's nomination. Should Rodas Alvarado fail to be nominated, their presence will create an ugly situation. Also, as a precautionary measure, the Civil Guard may attempt to hold back the customary weekend influx of peasants into Tegucigalpa, a move that will be difficult to implement and may also precipitate violence.

Colonel Oswaldo Lopez Arellano, chief of the Honduran armed forces, has indicated his concern over the possibility of disorder, but does not intend to intervene unless the Civil Guard is unable to control the situation. [redacted]

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West Germany - France: West Berlin Mayor Brandt will meet with De Gaulle at the general's invitation in northeastern France on 24 April. Brandt expects De Gaulle to try to obtain his unreserved acceptance of the Franco-German treaty, but the West Berlin leader intends to make no commitments. Brandt, for his part, will try to persuade De Gaulle to include West Berlin on the itinerary of his visit to Germany, which will occur soon after Bonn ratifies the treaty, probably in late June.

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France: In response to an Australian query about France's nuclear test plans, Paris has indicated that the choice of a French nuclear test site in the Pacific will be made before the end of the year. It expects, however, that a considerable period of time will elapse thereafter before any tests are conducted. In view of the official French statement on 17 April that France does not foresee any revision of the military clauses of the Evian agreement with Algeria, further underground nuclear tests in the Sahara may be in prospect.

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USSR: Preliminary reports of the first quarter economic results state that an "unprecedentedly severe winter" has adversely affected performance in most industries. US weather analysis supports this explanation, but the lower rates appear also to reflect a continuation of the economic slowdown in the USSR during the past two years. Crude steel and pig iron output actually declined slightly compared to the fourth quarter 1962--an almost unprecedented development. On the other hand, chemical output continues its rapid expansion as a result of the heavy emphasis now being placed on this industry.

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